Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021]

One notable method for controlling the operation of a power train in a motor vehicle may include controlling a clutch actuating mechanism so as to open a clutch with the power train being in a pull mode of operation (i.e., the engine is supplying power to drive or move the motor vehicle). Then, the transmission is changed or shifted from a first gear position to a second gear position via a neutral position, e.g., by moving or actuating a transmission actuator. In this embodiment, the transmission in the second gear position has a lower ratio than in the first gear position. At or about the same time, the ignition angle (ignition phase) of the spark-ignited combustion engine is shifted or changed during the gear change step to cause the combustion engine to temporarily generate a negative engine torque. As a result, the engine speed (RPM) is preferably decreased when the transmission is disposed in the neutral position. Consequently, a desired (e.g., higher or greater) engine torque can be rapidly realized or generated when (as soon as) the transmission actuator is disposed in the second gear position. Thereafter, with the transmission disposed in the second gear position, the clutch actuating mechanism preferably closes the clutch to permit the engine to again supply power to drive or move the wheels of the motor vehicle.

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